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Installation, blue

Mark Grimm

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ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
The College of Imaging Arts and Sciences
In Candidacy for the Degree of
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

Installation, Blue

by

Mark Edward Grimm

4.8.01

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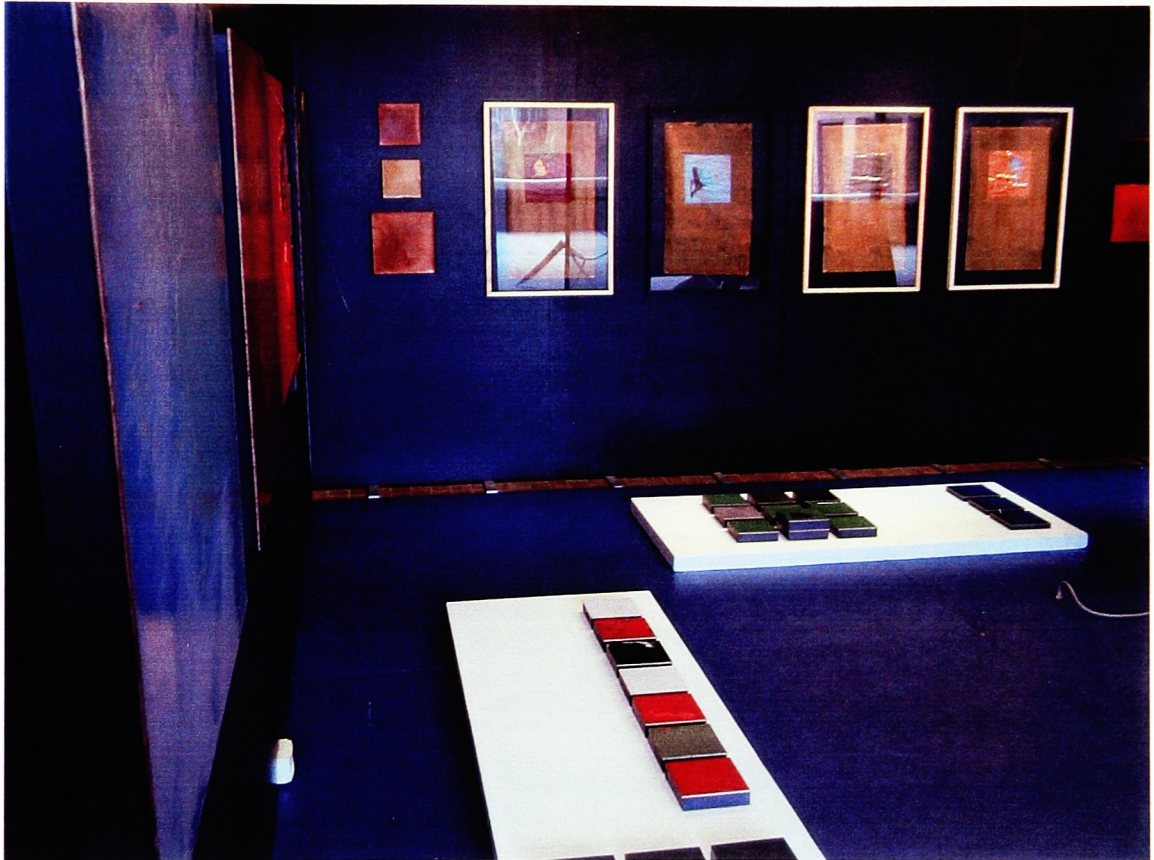
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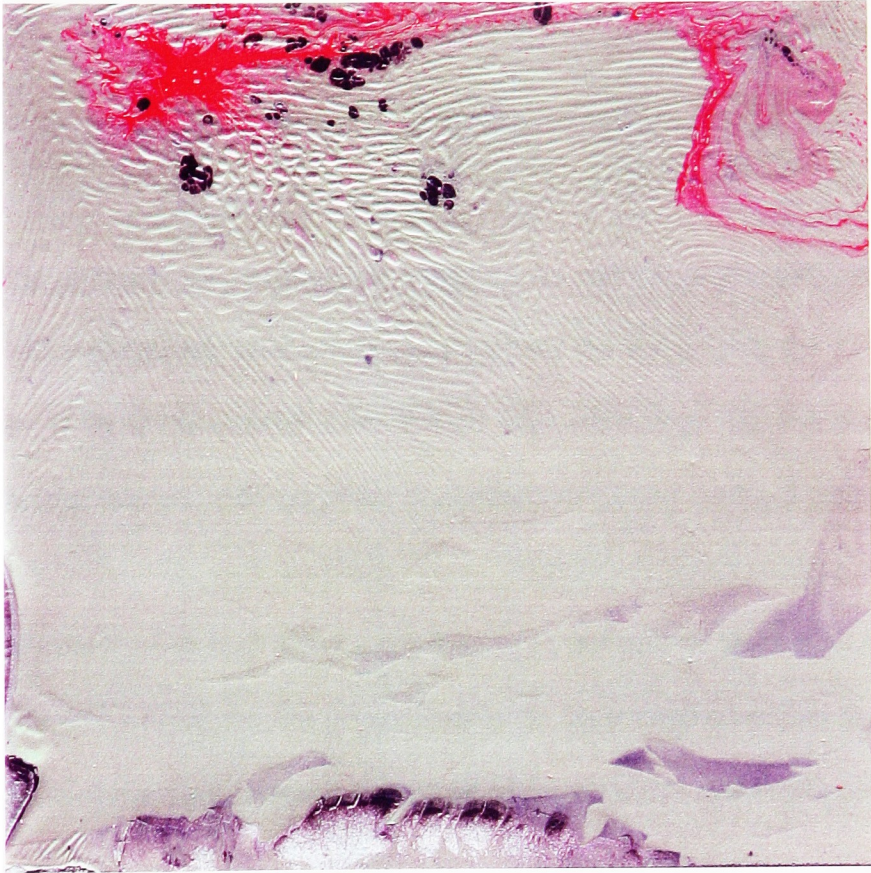
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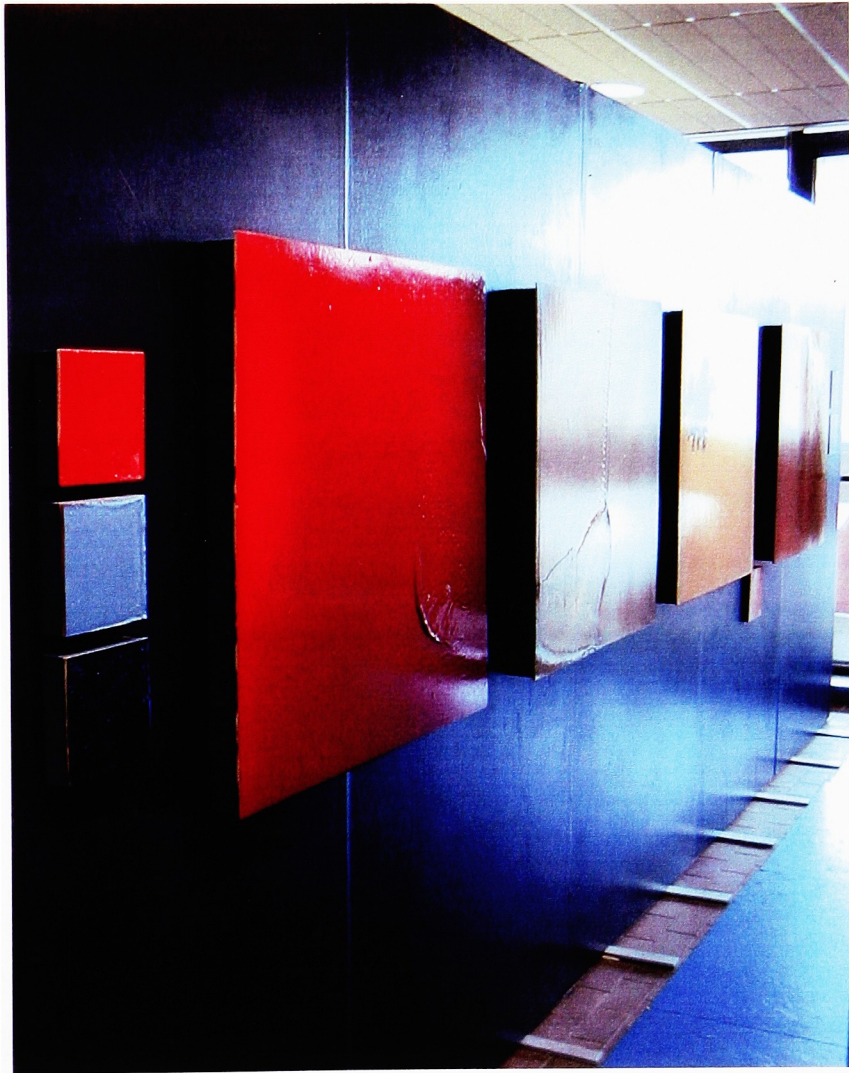
Technological advances are continuously changing the way we, as a culture, make art. As new tools are constructed, new processes invented, the artist is at the front of their development, as he is the creative force behind what technology can and can not do. If anyone is there to explore and exaggerate the limitations of new media, it is the artist.

A college like RIT is relevant today more than ever, because of these new and quickly developing tools. Provided for fine art students is the access and education to new media devices, as well as the highly regarded opinions of master artists and craftspeople, trained to have an intelligent and highly-critical eye. The merger of fine art, talent and new media, create a student body both diverse and complimentary in nature. It is here that Master's students find the exhibition space to examine new technologies and how they merge within the traditions of painting, drawing, and sculpture.

The thesis show of Mark Grimm took place in the year 2000. It explored how the artist could use these new tools to question space, time, installation and conceptualism. It acted as an important stepping stone for the artist, who is now delving into the highly abstracted worlds of sound and interactive exhibitions where new media and technologies are combined with the riches of studio arts. Grimm also continues to explore the relations of new media and art within the context of educational systems at Teacher's College, Columbia University. His current research takes on a level of competence highly formed by the experiences had at RIT.

The following papers represent the conversations Grimm held with colleagues and professors at Rochester Institute of Technology during the time of his thesis exhibition. In them, Grimm explores his personal history, philosophical concepts regarding video as an artistic medium, the art of installation, and process of painting. In them Grimm draws conclusions between painting and video and the portrayal of time and space, how our past forms our present, and the necessity of artist to act as curator. They act as the written requirement for the Master's of Fine Art Degree.

Amy Cheadle 2002



Installation as Medium

Mg: Hello, where shall we begin today?

Q: Why don't we talk about how close your thesis show came to meeting your aesthetic expectations?

Mg: I believe that what I set out to try to do was to have full control over my given space/environment. This included floor, walls, and the possibility of ceiling manipulation. This way of working was primarily based on current contemporary practices and the idea of "installation" as an artistic concept. I was greatly influenced by such installation processes such as those of Robert Irwin, Sol Lewitt, Joseph Bueys, Marcel Duchamp and others who have chosen, throughout their careers,

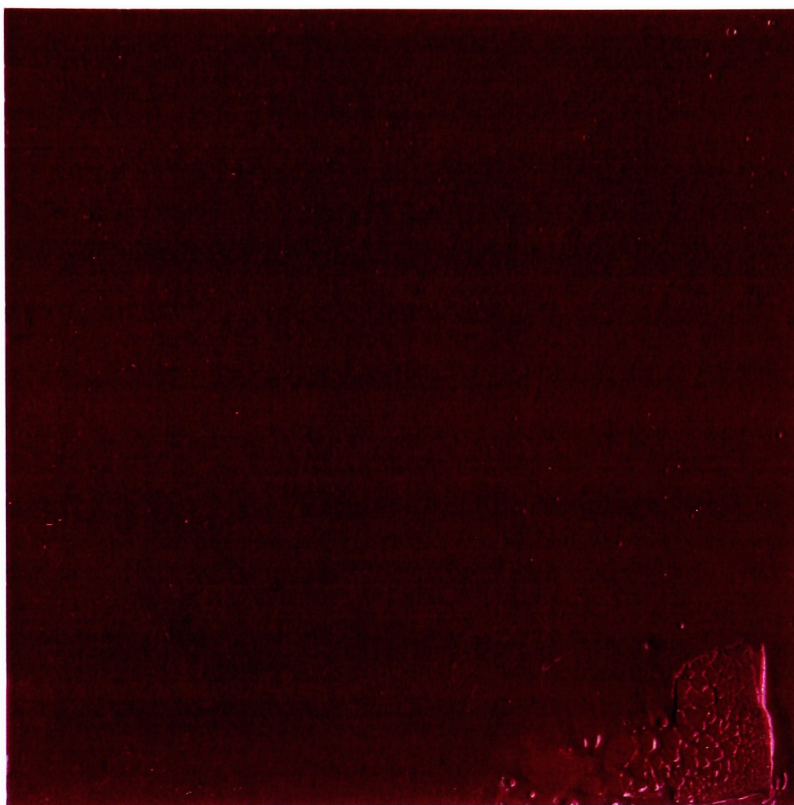
to move their work towards an installation savvy environment while moving away from the traditional and more formal, art practices in painting and drawing, and the installation of them in the gallery setting.

Q: What concepts did you want your audience to leave the show with? Did you achieve full control?

Mg: I don't really believe that I achieved the full possible control over my given surroundings as a whole. I think that there was a lot to be desired once everything was completed and I had time to step back and view my created setting. I had hoped to leave my audience with strong installation concepts and understandings, yet when I took a critical perspective on my own work, I saw something quite a bit different than what I had originally desired. The "control" that I had... it felt like just surface control. Maybe I could have done something on a more psychological level, and left the theatrics to set designers. Maybe if I had had a little more time, or a few more resources, I would have addressed the issues of experience/envelopment on another level.

Q: Given that the show was in a university setting, I don't think you ever could have had complete control over your given space. You covered the walls, the floor, you had a video and paintings displayed. Maybe if the video had had sound, the outside world could have faded into the background...

Mg: It was a little problematic because it was extremely difficult to envision accurately what my eventual installation would look like. This was one of my first real installations, at least in a gallery setting. Other installations that I did were more site specific; just simple installations that I could tinker with and adjust over a long period of time. At one point after the installation, I could question how I could have created the installation to work with the properties of the space in a more mutual way, rather than overpower and dominate them. But I had come from a long background in painting, where you can determine canvas scale and size, and push and pull the surface as much as you needed to until the piece is finished. You're allowed to have a certain extent of spontaneity. With the installation, everything had to be so "planned". In a way this preconceived planning was particularly difficult because it



didn't, in actuality, allow me to deter from my given spatial environment to the extent that I would have desired. To combat this predetermined space that I was given, I immediately began to think of ways that I could gain back some of my own control - this eventually materialized into the manipulation of the floor and the walls.

Q: Visually, you did present the viewer with a lot of stimulation.

Mg: Yes, I did. Probably too much ... but in a way that, I presume, was my main achievement; complete visual stimulation. In that case I think that the show was a great success! I basically wanted to do something that I believed had never been done in that gallery before. I also wanted to try my hand at something that I never had the opportunity to do before. Because this is a university and because I strongly believe that the concept of a Masters of Fine Art degree at a University level is to learn about art and to learn about being an artist. I approached my Masters Thesis show with the understanding that I was not there to create a masterpiece, but instead to learn as much as I could about my own artistic process while I had the opportunity to do so. Even

though aesthetically and conceptually the show never turned out to be a masterpiece, as a Masters Thesis I believe it was a great success. This may have been purely visual or conceptual in nature but given the circumstance, I feel that is alright.

Q: The stimulation did not stop with the visuals, however. There was definitely something else there- a feeling I think- like a sense of atmosphere. Or maybe it was just the smell of the car enamels.

Mg: Yeah, there was...it was like a strange blue atmosphere. That might not have been **exactly** what I wanted. I think the installation became a little too blue. As a whole the show was lacking some of the subtleties that I truly desired. Looking back I wish I had made my color choices differently ... little lighter perhaps ... it became awful dark in that space, which I guess could arguably add to the overall atmosphere. But personally, I wish the "blue" had been brighter ... almost white even. I guess I just didn't realize how much of the light in the gallery would be absorbed by the floor and walls being as dark as they were. My floor was in fact painted in a glossy blue which I thought might give it a reflective look, but again ... I was a

little disappointed in the eventual outcome. One thing for sure though is that in the many years that I attended R.I.T, I don't think I have ever seen anything quite like that in the gallery before.

Q: Yours was different, you mean, because you had manipulated the floor and walls.

Mg: Yes, I suppose ... or maybe it was just that really BLUE color on the floors and walls. But what I was really interested in was incorporating many different styles of artistic thought. Basically, I had wished to try it all. What eventually materialized from this became more of a New Media installation than any other type of installation in a traditional sense. By consciously resembling a new media standard, I invoked many different types of artistic media instead of sticking to just one. These media included painting, printmaking, film/video, computers, and installation/sculpture. With these different types of artistic media, I believe that I had amassed an enormous amount of information that I easily applied to my artistic education thus far. I felt that to truly demonstrate what I had learned in and throughout my

education I must summon all my current media expertise into a grand finale installation per se.

Q: How successful do you feel the blend of all of these genres turned out to be?

Mg: Well, as I stated before, I believe that it was fairly successful, yet I do admit that I had some difficulties. The integration of these different types of media I do believe turned out to be a success. To me it was fairly complicated when I came up with the notion of media integration in order to explore the concept of "new media". I had to envision how this integration was to take place and how I could find a familiar theme or concept in order to stabilize my experiment and in order to allow a common element to prevail throughout. This common element turned out to be a square color-field painting. This painting became a common theme in the film/video, the prints/paintings/drawings, the way the floor was constructed and the walls. It helped to teach me about space, art and the way we can construct different media to mean different things and carry forth different ideas.

Q: Ok, then let's talk about the experience and what it taught you.

Mg: Ok.

Q: See? We have already decided that you have learned a great deal.

Mg: Yes.

Q: What we haven't decided, is what it is specifically that you have learned.

Mg: Before you have an exhibition ... even a small one ... it is hard to gauge what the completed presentation will look like. Having never really had an exhibition of this magnitude before, it was difficult to visualize what the exhibition might look like when it is finally completed. I had many ideas to play with. There were an unlimited amount of combinations that I could present my work in. The right combination of paintings to suit the space at hand became the ultimate goal in space manipulation.

Q: How did you narrow them down?

Mg: At first I was very frustrated with what the space may look like. Thinking about it now I think I may have been a little nitpicky. As I was planning out how the exhibition would be presented I felt that the condition of the walls that I would be presenting on was poor. The fact that the walls could not be repaired, painted, or fixed because they were covered in fabric made my desire to manipulate them stronger.

Q: You felt that you had to alter the way the walls and the floors appeared. And maybe you did, because after the show, didn't they replace all of the panels in the gallery?

Mg: Yes, they did. I just felt that the space itself could have a point of perfection and accommodate my artwork in ways that the present condition of the walls could not. This increased my desire to install painted luan in place of the natural condition of the walls. This, I imagined, would create the kind of space that I envisioned myself showing in. So yes ... I thought that I would have to have full control over the space to claim it as my own: I wanted it to be mine. A space that was

not predetermined but instead a space that was completely controlled by the artist's hand. I guess it was an experiment on my part to learn about space and how space had the ability to be controlled.

Q: Do artists always manipulate things to claim them as their own?

Mg: To reinterpret is to redefine. I believe an artist's role is to continuously question these things we take for granted. A pencil, an apple, a urinal ... you know?

Q: Well, whether or not you need to redefine, I think that there is a great difference in the way you are displaying the same paintings today then the way you did for the thesis.

Mg: Well, I tried to pack as much as I could into such a small space. Now I bring the paintings out into a larger space, in fact a space without the limits a gallery room has.

Q: Back then, you attempted to control totally the environment that they lived in ... like maybe you

weren't sure if their quality would change if their context did.

Mg: Yes, right.

Q: Today you seem to see them living on their own, without you to "make a home" for them.

Mg: I may have been unsure of them to hold their own as artistic objects then?

Q: I think that is what I am trying to get at. Which do you feel is the more successful way to display the paintings? I mean, everything about your desires to bring them to the viewer's eye has changed ... but maybe we should stay on task and discuss only the Master's show.

Mg: Well, I think the issue is a pertinent one. And it does go to show how the artistic process moves. As long as you take the steps, you can move yourself down the street. The master's show was a step down that road, whether I stuck with the idea of "complete domination" or not.

Q: So you learned that it might not have been necessary for you to manipulate the total gallery atmosphere? Or did you learn to remove them from the gallery all together?

Mg: Instead of designing my own surroundings for them to go in, now they exist in the settings in which they are situated. They could have hung on the unmasked wall, but they would have been mere paintings. I wanted these boxes to be seen as objects; therefore I took away the walls, so to speak. I placed them on the floor to see if this would further their separation. But it wasn't only the connection to painting and all the painting that came before I wanted to remove, but our own notions of what constitutes art. If these paintings were art of some kind in the gallery, would they still be art lying on the sidewalk? Maybe it's a little twist in the direction of Duchamp.

Q: If you did a sequel to the thesis show, what would you do?

Mg: I wouldn't have to manipulate the space in order to be comfortable with where they would be placed. In fact, I might not have needed a space at all. The

pieces would merely be placed around the gallery, sharing spaces with people as they saw fit ... sitting on Betsey's desk, maybe even living outside of the building, but seen through the glass window. Maybe they would have been left all over the campus.

Q: Maybe at first you wanted them to be seen in the gallery. You needed to qualify them as art to yourself, before you were really free to tell everyone else that they could be seeing them as art too.

Mg: Yes, I felt the need to designate them as artistic objects. Yes ... exactly, they become painting that can live outside what they were originally meant for and the paintings haven't changed.

Q: OK. SO ... by creating a complex environment for them to live in, you realized that...

Mg: ...that they are still the same physical objects that I made a year ago, only now they might be charged with a new meaning.

Q: That is true and very interesting. Your intent and your idea for them is the only thing to have

changed. And because of that, the context for the works has changed as well. They are free to exist in a controlled environment, or in a non-controlled space. This is allowing your work to cross the boundaries of what is typically considered to be "fine art". How does it feel to be an 'outsider artist'?

Mg: I may have only needed a few small squares in that space 5 or 6.

Q: Yes, yes.

Mg: Maybe a little less or a little more.

Q: Maybe no spaces at all- but then you get into maybe no object at all. But this is the danger of minimalism. Sometimes it's best just to not even make it.

Mg: I didn't even need walls to make my space separate from the rest.

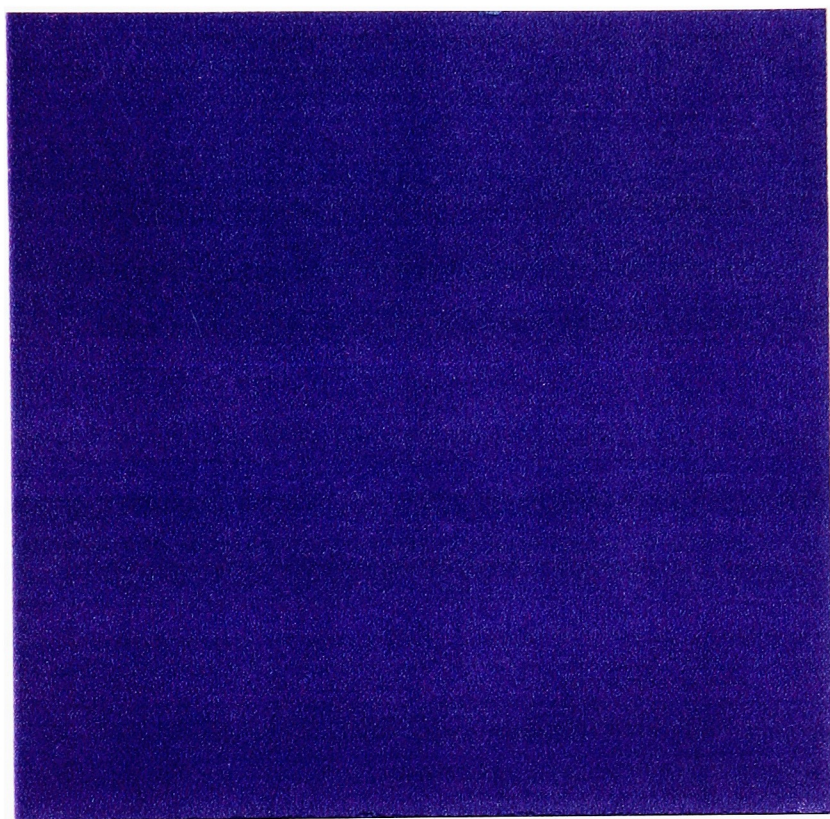
Q: Yup: So now today, you are questioning and maybe giving up on the concept of "my space"

Mg: Well "my space" was the walled in separated "space" that really excluded all the work to be shown together as a group show.

Q: Because that kind of gallery was really only equipped for the more traditional mediums; paintings, sculptures. I think that today a lot of the new media is really questioning "my space"

Mg: Well... you know I can never really own the space. I have it for a couple weeks then it's not mine so maybe it never was. The video that I did was the thing in my show that questioned space the most.

Q: Well, let's end this conversation with the paintings. We can start on the video another time.



Painted Objects

Q: So I guess that brings us to the paintings. We've discussed their meaning and content, maybe we should discuss their more formal elements. What kinds of paintings were presented in your thesis exhibition?

MG: Well... these paintings were small, three-dimensional, square, color field boxes made from poplar and luan woods. The top surface layer of these boxes - where the paint was applied - was made from luan, and the basic frame was made from poplar wood.

Q: So there was a sense of three-dimensionality?

MG: Yes. They were basically three-dimensional objects.

Traditionally paintings are really only meant to be two-dimensional surfaces, but when these paintings were conceptualized, I saw that they could not inhabit the walls alone. I began placing them onto the floor, making them more object-like in appearance than the simple flat planes or panels' one would normally see on a gallery wall. The size of them (8"x8"x2") gave them a depth that enabled them to exist as small sculptures.

Q: So did they transcend from pure painting to pure sculpture due to their new placement as floor pieces?

MG: They never became pure sculpture because the form and the medium that they embraced lay in painting and painterly techniques. I placed some of them on a pedestal to give them "sculptural" qualities but I also had intended for them to be picked up and utilized as visual objects. This tangible nature allowed these boxes to become medium hybrids, or a hybrid of sculpture and painting.

Q: Interesting notion of duality and cross-platform art. I think the idea of moving the elements

around the space is an interesting one, though I'm not sure it was a complete success. No one really attempted to do so, besides a cute little two year old, whose mother promptly dragged away. I guess to all the rest of your viewers, the rules of art were too deeply instilled.

MG: Definitely. But during installation, I saw that this idea of play really came out of my experiences in the gallery with the manipulation of space. In fact, the gallery director played in the space for quite a long time. They almost became like children's blocks, and that is an area that I could develop further. They became like Minimalist toys.

Q: So the pieces were akin to Minimalism, but you've mentioned that they were also color field paintings?

MG: Yes. I had taken a strong interest in the color field painters working in the late school of New York Abstract Expressionists - painters like Ellsworth Kelly, Robert Ryman, Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman. They were all experimenting with the quality a canvas can obtain when its surface

is void from any markings, subject matter...etc. The notion that paintings could now be about nothing but the paintings themselves helped to create this thought process of the color field. My paintings were initially supposed to invoke a more traditional color-field sensation, using acrylic enamel metallic paint. What happened however, due to the application method I used to lay down the paint, was that complex surface designs were created. Since accident is allied to the artistic process, I went with the natural flow of the paint. The paintings took on a certain quality I called "eye candy".

Q: I like the thoughts on the autonomy of the pieces you were looking to achieve. But by using car paints, there might have existed a reference to, well, cars. I know that we talked about that in the historical influences section, so we can skip it here, but I thought it a point worth mentioning. As these pieces evolve into your next project, it might be something to consider.

MG: Absolutely. In fact, as these pieces are being worked now, I am finding ways to avoid this car-

connotation by silk-screening on prefab metal- but I suppose that is for the next thesis project.

Q: So back on track, how did you apply the enamel to the boards? Isn't it quite toxic?

MG: Yes, it really is. My track record at RIT will prove that- one day, simply by opening a can of paint, the whole studio had to be evacuated due to the noxious odor. After that I had to work on the paintings outdoors, a reality that made winter work difficult. With a bit of experimentation, though, I discovered a very quick way to apply the paint. It allowed me the freedom to perform rapidly and in many different ways. The technique that I began to use started with my discovery that if the paint was poured on instead of brushed on, the paint would build up very thickly very fast and in a completely uniform manner. At first I began using this beautiful red color that I had found in my parent's barn. It was the color of 1967 Firebird my father restored. When I applied the paint in my first experimentation on a plywood board, I was given a stunningly consistent surface that represented color field paintings. Of course, the poured paint had a way of running off the

edges onto the floor. I realized that if I was to make a number of these paintings that it would get messy really fast. Also I figured that I needed a way to contain the paint so that I could get a quick build up with only one coat. Depending on the density of the applied paint it may take up to a week to dry, so I also needed a space that would adequately provide enough time for the drying process. I did eventually find that place, back in the shed where I found the paint, in the back of my parent's yard. I also did eventually discover a solution, after much experimentation, to the problem of the paint spilling over the edges. What I came up with was this: I would build my square surface, but instead of having the edges flush with there supporting sides I would leave a little lip of luan; about $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch deep. To this lip I would attach duck tape all the way around the painting, until I created a little reservoir that would contain the paint as I was pouring it in. After about a week, after the paint was completely dry, I would remove the tape. After removing the tape there would be this little jagged edge created by the contact of the paint with the tape. To resolve this I would take the square paintings and would cut the edge of the luan off with a band

saw until the edge of the luan was flush with the edges of the poplar surface supports. This resolved the issues I had been wrestling with, and helped to make for a completely uniform and flat surface.

Q: How long did this experimentation process last?

MG: Actually I worked on this process off and on for a number of months. I had many failures on the way.

Q: So even though you escaped using a brush or other tool, and even though you devised a method for pouring and containing the painted surface, the paint had a mind of its own and created random patterns?

MG: Yes. But as I found out it also mattered what the natural translucency of the paint was. More opaque paints like red, white and black had created no patterns at all. When applied, they became color-fields. On the other hand, paints like gold, blue, green, silver and most other variations of these created these beautiful rhythmic patterns that I have talked about. I can't really explain scientifically why this happened, I actually have

no idea. It was an unplanned reality of the material, but I was happy to have experienced it.

Q: I guess this would be a new twist to the language of the color field painters. It almost mixes the spontaneity and chance happenings of the Abstract Expressionists- it almost reminds me of the way Pollock devised the drip-method, but it meets the calculated color-fields, and also the minimalist strategies of the sequence and uniformity off the squares in relation to one another. Do you feel it important to link yourself to any of these groups in any way?

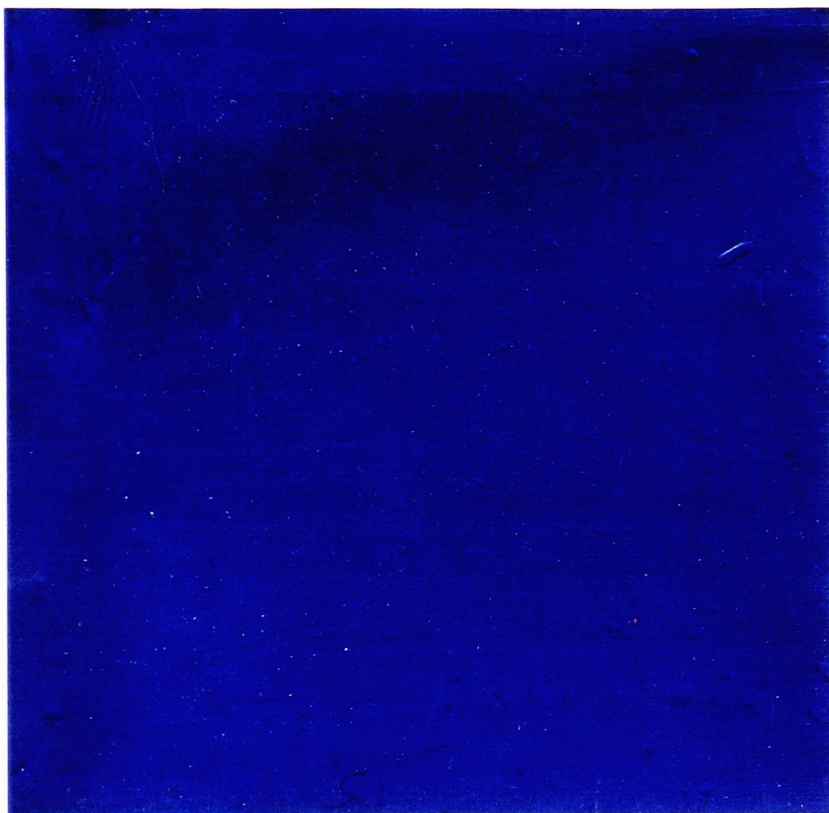
MG: Well.... It's weird. When I first got into this my first intention was to eradicate the brush stroke. I felt that the brush stroke gave too much away about the artist and the techniques that he or she used in the artistic process. I guess I felt an immediate kinship with color field painters, but over time I realized I had less in common with them than with designers and conceptualists at the beginning of the Twentieth century. Marcel Duchamp, the Bauhaus, Dada, Futurism, and other movements of this nature I felt were very important to my workings as an artist. Also, I began to feel

strongly about the Earth art movement. Richard Sierra and Robert Smithson and also the phenomenological light artists like Dan Flavin and Robert Irwin. I guess I have a lot of reverence for many fields of art.

I felt camaraderie to artists that were a little more cerebral than visual. Yes... being visual had a lot to do with it but..... I still wanted to create something both intellectual and visually stimulating at the same time. These paintings in a way could be either-or. It's just up to the audience to decide which role the art should take. As for some type of intellectual message, I guess the message you receive from the works might have to do with your degree of historical artistic knowledge. The meaning does have a lot to do with this conversation of autonomous, objects of art.

Q: They are definitely about painting, not reflections of the external world. This, to me, is cerebral.

MG: Yes. The way that I intended to present them took them out of the conventional context of the painted surface, and placed them into a completely



different territory, which put them in an entirely different historical context. This context, in that which was absent was hundreds of years of historical foundations (i.e. the traditions of painting, sculpture and drawing) was a more conceptual, or even "space" related art where beginnings are fairly recent....the beginning of the 20th century.

Q: And into the world of the object? How did you display them?

MG: I displayed them in two different ways. In one way I displayed them on pedestals on the floor, and in the other on the wall. In both circumstances, however, they were displayed with what I considered high-design orientation.

Q: What made them design oriented?

MG: The conceptual idea behind these painting was that not only was each individual painted square a painting in itself, but you could also put them together to create other works of art. I made them perfect squares, because I didn't want them to have any direct orientation. I wanted them to be

able to be moved around like a puzzle. For example, I wanted to be able to take like 30 paintings in a space and make one or two pieces out those thirty by arranging them in many different ways thus I would be designing with them. This would allow me unlimited combination variables in order to "design" the specific space at hand by displaying the paintings to compose the given space at hand.

Q: Oh! You mean, by "designing" the space with the paintings?

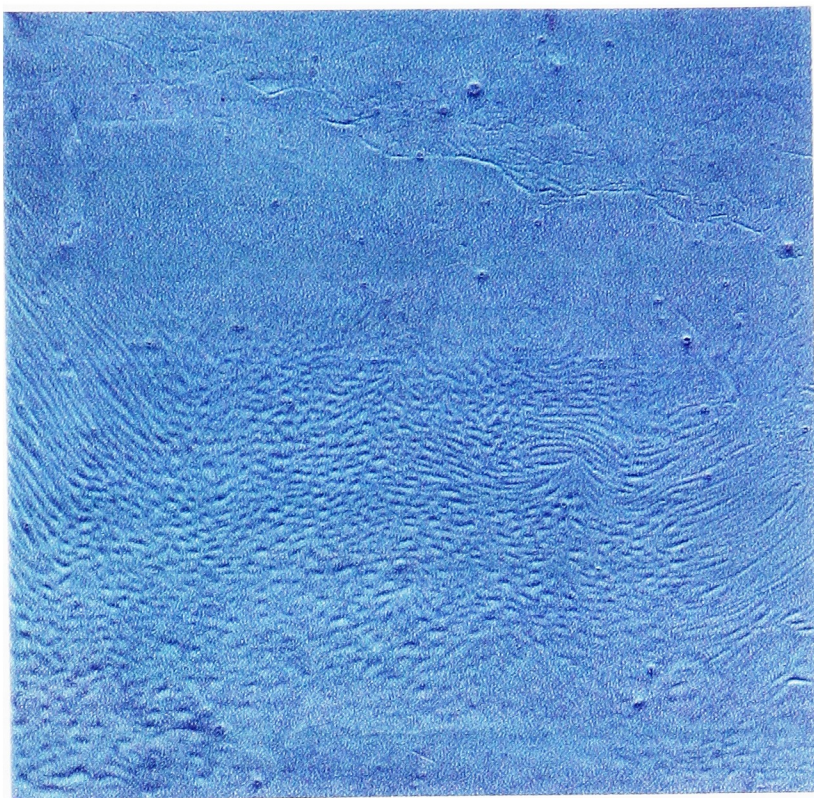
MG: Yes. Also the painting themselves were designed with the intention that I could have someone else produce them for me, without forfeiting any of the original quality of the works. Theoretically, all I would have to do was to give my own specifications on how they would be fashioned. Then anyone whom I deemed to have a high fabrication standard could produce my works for me. This may be related to Andy Warhol and "the factory" or in a traditional sense, even Rubens. These figures of art history allowed for others to do their work for them according to their specifications. Like me, the quality of their work was based on the quality of the fabrication

and the concept that the artist gave to the fabricator to produce the work. This I feel by no means compensates my artistic integrity but only adds to the "idea" or "concept" or cerebral quality of the work.

Q: So these were paintings meant to be made assembly style by anyone, then shipped off to galleries where the director or installation crew would place them however they wished?

MG: Well, I could be left with a number of options using a particular format. It would be possible, according to the nature of the works that I, physically, would not have to be present as the head design coordinator of my own exhibition. I could just ship the paintings off to the gallery that I was to present my work in, and let the curator decide what configuration the paintings would be displayed in. This would be a way of collaborating between the curator and the artist. I am sure this stemmed out of my experiences as both an artist, and a gallery installer.

Q: Therefore, the only thing LEFT for you to take credit for would be the IDEA, thus making them



cerebral.

Mg: Yes. The IDEA would be the paintings themselves. After I created the prototype, they could easily be shipped off to a fabricator that would replicate them in various color combinations, and from there, the pieces could ideally be shipped directly to a gallery for exhibition purposes without me ever even seeing them or touching them. This is my own sense of removal from the tangible object in art to the conceptual or cerebral quality of how a visual form can be exhibited. Even though the paintings could be considered "minimal" the idea of display becomes quite conceptual. The beauty of this idea is also that I am left with a number of options. I could opt to arrange the paintings in the gallery or exhibition space myself, or as stated previously, I could opt not to. These options allow me the choices that art itself can allow. Allowing me to make different types of meanings from different types of situations give me, the artist, ultimate control within a fixed boundary of space.

Q: What if a gallery from CA ordered 35 paintings.

Would you fly out and arrange it?

Mg: Well....maybe if I wanted to visit the beach and get a suntan...sure. But then again not necessarily...no. The gallery curator could see a bunch of pictures from previous shows and create their own design in the space. It allows them to be the artist.

Q: There is importance in the role of the curator, no doubt.

MG: Yes, very important. It calls into play whether or not the curator can attack the role of artist.

Q: So you feel the paintings are your way of acknowledging the importance of the curator/installer? And, if you are neither making nor arranging the work, how do you address the accusations one would make that you are, essentially, allowing someone else your title as artist, even as your name is to these pieces? Do you have a rebuttal to critics who would call you, ultimately, a lazy artist?

MG: Well...I guess if Warhol and Duchamp could get away with it, than so can I. Warhol utilized his "factory" to fabricate popular culture, Duchamp used his ready-mades as conceptual stumbling blocks that poked fun at the art world, and I am making puzzle pieces to a kind of "make your own art, design your own world" democratic, capitalistic culture that everyone has a right to indulge in.

Q: Ok ... well thank you very much!

MG: And thank you!



Video as New Media

Q: Let's talk about the video that you had shown in your thesis exhibition. What purpose did it have within the installation?

Mg: Well... I believe that movies pull the viewer in a very different manner than traditional art forms do. Video has the ability to create an entirely new type of environment, not only in space, but also in time. To me, that is the definition of new media; to move beyond the contained and static energy of traditional "wall" art. In creating a "new media" type installation, I thought it essential to add depth of time and space as an exhibition standard. What I was trying to do, was to open up the

installation from a static, non-changing situation to one that became partially interactive-interactive in the sense that the given spatial environment was not in any way fixed in time/space, but instead fluxuated time, speed, and sound. This brought my work from a fixed "artistic" perspective to what one might call a "media" perspective.

Q: I see.

Mg: This media that became my installation also became something that was non-restrictive. By non-restrictive, I mean that it doesn't have to follow the same laws as, say, a painting within a frame. It is something that doesn't need physical existence in order for it to be existent in real time. It becomes a focal identity, meaning that perception is consistently in a state of change. My film was really trying to find that non-existent physical space and tap into it in a non-linear manner. It was trying to push my abilities as a painter and as an artist to where I wasn't following the same rules as a typical painter would. In a way, the film was still painting, but I didn't need to paint on a physical surface per say. It was like painting in the air. It was a painting that

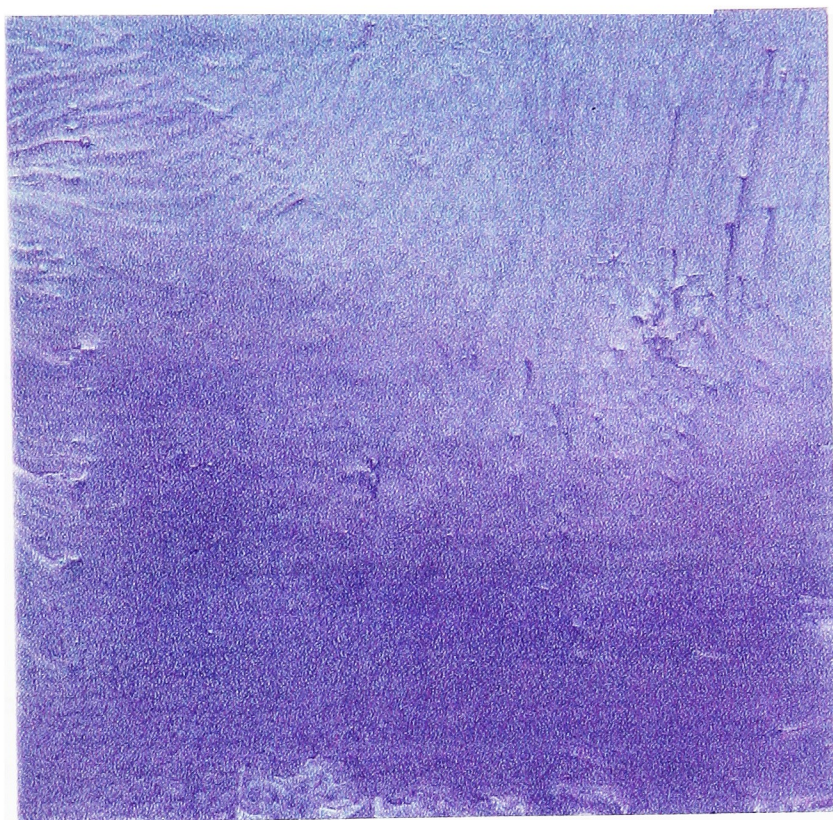
became intangible physically yet concrete, perceptually.

Q: Interesting, but something still needs to catch the projection of the film as it shoots through time and space.

Mg: Yes, well hold on a minute. It became really free because I was able to step away from the canvas and take a different perspective on a totally different type of art form. The canvas that, in many ways, can be very restricting in painting became borderless. In traditional artistic surfaces you have a fixed boundary of space to deal with. Yet, in new media, your boundary is in three dimensional spaces. It's not just a two dimensional plane anymore. It becomes a very liberating surface with a whole new range of contextual views to accommodate it. Thus this creates an ultimate new identity for and within itself.

Q: An example of some of the concepts that you are talking about may lay in the work of someone like say...Tony Oursler, for example.

Mg: Yes, in Oursler's work, Oursler is deceptive in that he builds spatial relationships using video to project "time based" concepts on three-dimensional form. Unlike Oursler, though, I am still using a more traditional projection method by projecting on a two-dimensional surface-the wall-the projection screen. These are common elements in the evolution of video/film as a media form. In away, by presenting the video the way that I did, as a more traditional presentation method, I believe I was saying a little something about the history of video/film as an art form. The film itself was black and white and digitally filtered to have an old grainy/dusty look to it. This analog to digital to analog process that I used came out of my printmaking experience. In photo-etching I used a process where I would take an analog image that I took from a camera, run it into a computer, digitally enhance it to achieve a desired effect and then print it using more traditional printmaking techniques. This way of working was very similar to the way I constructed the video. It was very process oriented in that I gathered images/time sequences from the real world, digital reconstructed them to achieve a desired effect and then presented them in old school, analog style



using more traditional means. My output, then, became this mixture of media realities, constructed from different forms of representation. To compare this idea to my paintings, my paintings were created in similar fashion except that instead of my process being analog to digital to analog, it was digital to analog to digital. The final product mimicked the pixilization of the digital world in a representative style that allowed the viewer to assemble its own perceived reality (the real-time that computer imagery was meant to represent).

Q: Amazing. By far a most interesting notion of mixing media and eras. Lets talk a little about the content of the video and if or not was there a narrative, and how it may have related to the rest of the show.

Mg: Well...there was a slight narrative, yes. I didn't, though, want the narrative to be too prevalent, so I tried to abstract it in many different ways. The long sequences of the main character walking up and down the stairs became the more artistic elements in the film. By creating these real-time sequences with alternating camera angles, I had hoped to

achieve a sense of travel, the idea of distance, the idea of solitude in getting from one place to another to achieve a certain goal and then return. In this case the goal happened be somebody interested in the main characters paintings. We assume that it's a gallery but we can never be quite sure, because I choose to eliminate the sound from the film. I did this because I felt that sound would give this film too much of a story line, and again, I wanted to keep the film semi-abstract. When viewing the film you see the characters mouths moving, yet fail to hear anything come out of them.

Q: I see.

Mg: The narrative itself was loosely based on an artist approaching a gallery director to talk about his paintings. The paintings, those in the thesis exhibit itself, were really the main characters of the film. These paintings are presented to the gallery director during the middle of the film. You can notice that they are talked about for quite sometime. Then the two shake hands, and the artist leaves only to return in the same manner from whence he came.

Q: Does this narrative relate to anything that you have experienced?

Mg: Well no...not really. I think I just came up with it in order to make my paintings do something other than just sit on the wall. I wanted to make a film about paintings. This little film was about the life of an artwork and the journey it makes in order for it to be shown. The main actors in the film were the paintings themselves. That is why when the paintings are shown they are in color even though the rest of the film is not. The film itself is just a different form of stage that the paintings are performing in. So really, if the film is about anything, it is about painting and art itself.

Q: How were the paintings edited to be color, when the rest of the film was in black and white?

Mg: Well, that was a very, very complicated process. I had to learn a whole lot about video and video production, which I knew nothing about at the time. Part of my motivation... a lot of my motivation... I must admit, for creating a film/video for my thesis exhibition, was to learn how to do video production

using video equipment and computers. In order to achieve this I had to gain the knowledge of how to come up with a story, gather actors/performers, find a setting, and learn how to, essentially, become a film student. This all turned out to be awfully difficult and time consuming, yet also incredibly rewarding. After the filming was completed, I had to learn how to do video editing with the computer. This meant taking all my footage, logging it, and trying to make sense out of it. I had never used the software that was involved before, Adobe Premiere. I did not have any instructor to teach me how to use it. I spent a great deal of time, through trial and error, learning how to use this software. It was all exceedingly complicated. Once I eventually got to editing the video, I picked up the process fairly quickly... it all began to get easier and easier as I went on... until, of course, I had superimpose the color paintings in a finished black and white film. This was very extremely difficult and I spend weeks finishing it. I basically had to edit the film frame-by-frame, putting each colored image in its proper place. It really took a lot of time and patience, but I believe it was well worth it.

Q: It sounds like it, because of the knowledge that you gained from the experience of doing something like that. Most MFA students in a painting/studio program don't get much of an opportunity to explore outside their chosen medium like that.

Mg: Yes. But I believe that is changing as electronic medium becomes more and more of an excepted art form in MFA programs. This video helped me to challenge my own idea of what art is. In many ways I was enlightened to the fact that I could explore similar concepts through a wide range of different mediums. Sound, the internet...these are new places that are being explored at the moment and it is not that difficult to take your art into these new and exiting territories.

Q: Video and new media also help to question space, and the architecture of digital environments.

Mg: Yes. And that is partially what the paintings were lacking. They didn't question space as much as the video did. And that, I think is what made that video so interesting. That is what makes New Media so interesting in that it had the ability to

question space in different ways, ways that
painting just will never be able to.

Q: Yes. Thank you very much.

Mg: And thank you.



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